From: joseph dalessandro <jdman@magpage.com>
To: ACLU NADINE STROSSMAN <nstrossen@aclu.org>, Alan K...
Date: Tue, Oct 12, 1999 8:59 PM
Subject: This Sunday Night!!

This Sunday Night 9 PM ET.

The story of Allan Freed 1950's,most of what you see is what our Program Deals with,We teach about the Black Teenage Boys and Girls who sang on the Street Corners across Urban America during the 1950's.

LPFM RADIO FCC Docket MM 99-25

Our Show is Called the "Sunday Night Street Corner Harmony Show"

STREET CORNER HARMONY SHOW

The history of Rhythm and Blues can easily be likened to a ""Journey"" down a major highway with many tributaries branching out along the way. The people that took part in this "Journey" were primarily Black but we will see that the white community did make contributions, some of it out of love of the music and sometimes out of sheer greed.

There are actually two major "Journeys" that directly impacted the development of Rhythm and Blues as a significant American musical art form. The first migratory "Journey" is rooted in the onerous slave trade that uprooted native Africans and brought them to America in bondage. This involuntary migration is referred to as the "Middle Passage" which signifies the 300 year period that slaves were brought into America, starting in the 1600's.

Although these unfortunate people brought no physical belongings other than the chains that kept them imprisoned, they did bring a rich musical tradition rooted in West African folklore and customs. As their forefathers had passed down tribal histories through stories and songs, they too would retain links to their heritage through their remembrances and interpretations of these stories and songs. Unique West African musical characteristics such as the "call and response" technique would become a major element in both Gospel and Rhythm and Blues song stylings but that's jumping ahead a bit.

Slavery in America was 100 years old when a religious revival swept the American colonies between 1720 and 1750. This revival prompted slave owners to introduce christianity to their slaves. It was hoped that anger and unrest among slaves would be mellowed by Christian doctrine. Slaves were taught protestant hymns from the religious songbook, "Watts Psalms and Hymns and Bibles" written by Reverend Isaac Watts. These hymns became so familiar to slaves that the term "Dr. Watts" was often used to describe any hymn, whether or not it

was composed by Watts.

Along with the "Dr. Watts" songs, slaves had also developed work songs and chants that became a way of easing the burdens of toiling long and hard hours in the fields. These work songs were used to communicate everyday events, as well as containing hidden meanings that only the slaves could understand. They began infusing these songs with a 'moaning' or 'bluesey" sound that reflected their rage and hopelessness of enslavement. These hymns, songs and chants would develop into what would be known as spirituals.

In many African cultures, special gatherings that centered on songs and dances were important means of communicating tribal history and customs. African slaves in America continued this practice on the plantations in what were known as "Camp" or "Brush Arbor" meetings. These were usually held in the woods at night unknown to the plantation owners who would view this as a rebellious act. They began blending together music of their past and the new "Christian" music taught by their masters.

The conclusion of the Civil War in 1865 officially ended slavery but the lot of Black Americans wasn't greatly improved and maybe worsened, especially in the "Jim Crow" South. One post-war development however, that played a great part in our musical odyssey was the creation of a school for freed slaves in Nashville, TN.

The Fisk School was opened in 1866 in an abandoned Union Army barrack under the auspices of the American Missionary Association of New York City and the Freedmen's Aid Commission. The school was destitute and desperately required funds. George L. White, Fisk choirmaster, suggested to the Board of Directors, that he take the Fisk choir on tour to raise money. His plan was rejected but White raised the money on his own and in 1871 took a group of nine Fisk students on the road.

Initially the group sang classical works and proper hymns and their reception was lukewarm among the white audiences. Among themselves they sang the "spirituals" that were born of those not too distant "Camp Meetings". Our musical "Journey" here is intended to highlight events that are considered "defining moments" in the evolution of Rhythm and Blues. One of those moments would occur on the evening of November 15, 1871 during a concert of the Fisk Singers. Near the end of the performance, Choirmaster White inserted a spiritual song "Steal Away to Jesus". The response was utterly enthusiastic.

White transformed the entire performance into spirituals and the Fisk Singers became overnight sensations. They would appear before President Grant at the White House and later before Queen Victoria during a European tour. More importantly they brought back $20,000 that

was used to purchase 45 acres that is now Fisk University. Other black institutions quickly followed lead and formed choirs of their own. Two of them were Hampton College in Virginia that would become the springboard for the Deep River Boys in 1936 and the Piney Woods School in Mississippi that would help launch the Five Blind Boys of Mississippi.

The spirituals sung by these fledgling groups would become the basis for what would become known as "Jubilee" style singing. The Fisk choir later ecame known as the Fisk Jubilee Singers. Also evolving at this time were other singing groups springing up that were not associated with any school. Typically, these Quartets began "updating" the spirituals sung by choirs sound by introducing vocal solos, particularly by lead tenors and bass singers. One of those early groups that became extremely popular was the Norfolk Jubilee Singers. By the 1930's, the Jubilee "Quartets" had mushroomed throughout the South. Leading the way would be the Golden Gate Quartet. The Jubilee sound would evolve into what we now know as Gospel music which is one of the main ingredients that make up Rhythm and Blues.

It might seem a bit ironic that a hip Bluesman going by the name of "Georgia Tom" would become known as the "Father of Gospel" music but that is what happened to Tomas Andrew Dorsey. He spent his younger days playing blues piano in dancehalls and bars. Dorsey also spent time on the road touring with risque Blues singers like "Ma" Rainy, Bessie Smith and Tampa Red. He even composed songs like, "It's Tight Like That" and "Pat That Bread". There was certainly no hinting at any religious fervor at this time in his life.

However, in 1932 his wife died in childbirth along with the baby. In those heartwrenching, dismal days that followed, Dorsey wrote what would become one of the all time favorite Gospel songs, "Precious Lord, Take My Hand". He would go on to write over 500 Gospel songs and would single handedly change the face of Black church music. He formed the first female Gospel quartet and choir in 1931. Along with longtime colleague and singer, Sallie Martin, Dorsey founded the first National Convention of Gospel Choirs and Choruses in 1932. He was the mentor to the first generation of Gospel singers like Clara Ward and Mahalia Jackson. Many years, Elvis Presley would record his composition, "Peace In The Valley".

Another post-Civil War venue presented itself for Black entertainers and that was the Minstrel shows which was the precursor to Vaudeville. A diversified mixture of comedy sketches, dancing and singing would be

the staples of these traveling troupes (Sounds like an early Ed Sullivan show).

What is believed to be the very first recording of a Black vocal group was a performance by the Standard Quintette, "Keep Movin'" in 1894. The Standard Quintette recorded several "cylinders" for Columbia records. While the Standard Quintette recorded on cylinders, the first recording on "flat" records by a Black vocal group were six one-sided discs issued by Victor Recording Company of the Dinwoodie Colored Quartette. Recorded in New York City, October 1902, these recordings of Spirituals show a close harmony style. The group was composed of Sterling Rex, Clarence Meredith, Harry Cruder, and J. Mantell Thomas and Rollo Wilson. The group was organized at the Dix Industrial School of Dinwoodie, VA. For years the group sang in YMCA buildings, churches, etc and raised large sums of money for the school. Eventually, the group moved onto the Vaudeville circuit but disbanded in 1904.

Another one of these early "Vocal Groups" was the Old South Quarette, who became well known performing with a white banjo player, Polk Miller (This certainly predates some of the "integrated" groups of the 1950's, such as the Crests, Rob Roys, Five Discs and Del Vikings). Miller and the Old South Quartette had a variety show of "Stories, Sketches and Songs" that depicted black life before the Civil War. Mark Twain referred to two of their selections as "musical earthquakes". Miller toured with the group for twenty years until his death in 1913. The group recorded with Miller for Edison records in 1909 and several records for QRS in 1929. Their varied repertoire went beyond spirituals and included more secular numbers like "Pussy Cat Rag". A short while later, another group would make a tremendous impact on the music world with a "cat" song

It should also be noted that during the early part of this century another uniquely American art form was taking shape and would simply be called "The Blues." The defining moment for the Blues came in 1920 when Okeh records recorded "Crazy Blues" by Mamie Smith. Both the Blues and Gospel were born of the black experience rooted in slavery. One turned to God for salvation and freedom while the other lamented the pain of daily life in America for a Black person.

Ok, we're almost there. The main ingredients are in place but there is another ""Journey" that takes place, which has a profound effect upon the development of Rhythm and Blues.

The second "Journey" was known as the "Great Migration" and took place during the first two decades of the twentieth century. During this time, a massive number of blacks migrated from the impoverishment and repression of the rural South and headed North for hopes of a better life. Black owned Northern newspapers such as the "Chicago Defender" encouraged migration and became the most important sources of information for migrants coming from the South. By the 1920's and 1930's, the musical stew in America was mixing up Swing bands, Blues, Jazz, Pop and an emerging hard edged Gospel sound that came roaring out of the Black sanctified Baptist churches. Hard edged bluesmen were making their mark in the Mississippi Delta and the hard scrabble towns of Texas and Oklahoma. However, it would be four brothers

playing "kazoos" that would provide the next defining moment in our Rhythm and Blues saga.

That moment would occur in 1932 when a group of young brothers from Piqua, Ohio recorded a called "Tiger Rag". The group was the Mills Brothers and most musicologists point to them as the starting place for what we refer to as "R&B Vocal Group Sound". Ironically, they were hailed as great vocal innovators because they imitated musical instruments with their voices and were, at times called the "Human Band". As
the story goes, the reason they began to imitate instruments is that they forgot their kazoos one day and had to improvise the sounds.

Mills Brothers' imitators began multiplying and the "vocal group race" was off to a good start. The unique sound of the Mill's Brothers could be heard in dozens of groups over the next two decades. Following the Mills Brothers, the next significant group of "musical innovators" would be the Ink Spots who would popularize the "talking" bass role on their hugely successful hit, "If I Didn't Care" in 1939.

However, the "Journey" isn't quite over with yet. World War II would provide another major impetus for blacks to leave their Southern homes and head to work in the burgeoning war plants of the North. The profound sociological and cultural changes of preceding and during World war II were accompanied by two significant technological developments; the invention of the electric guitar in the late 30's and the
discovery of the German invented tape recorder by the music industry at the end of the war. The relatively affordable magnetic tape recorder simplified the recording process and allowed enterprising individuals to start "independent" record companies. Major record companies in America at this time had little interest in recording "race" music which was the term used to identify records of black performers.

Now we're getting into familiar "musical" territory. The cacophony of sounds is brewing, cheap technology has spawned the "independent" record producer looking to make a quick buck. Characters like Syd Nathan (King records), Art Rupe (Specialty), The Chess Brothers
(Chess records), Herman Lubinsky (Savoy records) and others are listening to those new sounds and how they can make money. Oh, there's another technological contrivance that has a part to play in this "Journey", the Jukebox. Jukeboxes require records. Someone had to produce those records and certainly someone had to sing on those records. In addition, the restriction on shellac was lifted after World War
II. What does that have to do with music? You needed shellac to make records. The Independent record producers now had everything that they needed, performers, raw materials, products and an audience eager to buy that product.

Now the picture is coming into focus! The stage is set. We have seen how the Black migration from the Southern farms fueled the
development of the Black urban communities or "ghettos", as some would refer to them, in major Northern cities such as Chicago, Detroit, Kansas City, Baltimore and New York. Blacks who were still restricted by Northern racism wanted their own entertainment. The "Jook

Joints" and clubs that proliferated in those Black urban centers became the musical laboratories required to create a new sound. They provided the climate that started blending the old and new sounds. Those old blues sounds from the Delta were now mixing with the stacatto bursts from the electric guitar and honking tenor saxaphones. New boogie beats and shuffles were coming at a frantic pace

Those Blues pacesetters were the direct predecessor of our Rhythm and Blues performers and they proliferated after World War II. Hotbeds of this new swinging blues style were places like Los Angeles that featured the likes of Roy Milton, Joe Liggons, T-Bone Walker and others.

The Blues style of the west coast was different from the blues based music produced at the same time by singers and musicians in Chicago, Memphis or Detroit.

Renowned R&B bandleader Johnny Otis is quoted as saying, "I can't be sure of this but the only explanation I can offer is that the cats around Chicago came from the Delta of Mississippi, Alabama and around there. Our guys came from Oklahoma and Texas and there was a difference. Our California blues style was a Texas-Oklahoma combination, that Southwestern influence. And it was a very different tradition. They drew on the swing band thing I mentioned earlier. The guy who started it all, T Bone Walker, who really was the father of the whole electric style of guitar. I don't know of anyone else before him, now he was a Texan. Charles Brown who did this thing that penetrated so deeply into all our consciousness is a Texan. Joe Liggins is I believe from Oklahoma and Roy Milton too. Eddie Cleanhead Vinson is a Texan. The Texas, Oklahoma thing is what happened here."

Mr. Otis was absolutely correct. The migration patterns of the first half of the century clearly show the majority of Black immigrants from the Delta heading straight up the Ol' Mississippi River for Chicago, Memphis, St' Louis, Kansas City and Detroit, finding jobs in the slaughterhouses and automobile factories. Their Texas-Oklahoma counterparts tended to head out to the west coast finding work in the wartime defense plants. Migration patterns along the east coast would show movement from the Carolinas and the Tidewater area of Virginia up to the idustrial Northeast, primarily in Philadelphia and New York City. These migration patterns are significant in our story because they created some very unique regional sounds in the music of the 1950's. Rhythm and Blues afficienados still talk in terms of the "West Coast" sound or the "Chicago" sound.

Remember in the beginning of our "Journey" we mentioned there were white contributions made to the development of Rhythm and Blues? Earlier, we saw how the Indie' record owners came into existence. Although some Black owners would emerge, such as Don Robey (Peacock Records), Bobby Robinson (Red Robin Records), Dootsie Williams (Dootone/Dooto Records), the vast majority were white men.

Despite the fact that they were only into this business to make money, this "Journey" could taken very different turns. That's not to imply that Rhythm and Blues would not have occurred but it would have left the major record companies as the only outlet. They were catering to white audiences and dishing out heaping platters of Patti Page, Frank

Sinatra, Joni James and the Ames Brothers. There was very little capacity on their part to promote some very ragged, boisterous, blazing, honking, jiving Black sounds. The Independent record companies because of their size and nature filled that gap. These men took risks and staked their livelihood on the fact that they understood this new market and really were the driving force behind it's emergence.

There were also white contributions on the creative end as well. Although Rhythm and Blues was Black urban music, there are several interesting paradoxes surrounding that statement. Johnny Otis has been called the "Father of Rhythm and Blues". Be that as it may, he is generally considered one of the major players in the development of Rhythm and Blues. He is a white man of Greek heritage.

Atlantic Records was one of the early Independent record companies that built it's fortune on Rhythm and Blues. Founder and owner, Ahmet Ertegun felt that his first vocal group, the Clovers, didn't sound "bluesey" enough, so "HE "wrote some of their first R&B hits. Ertegun was
the son of a Turkish ambassador to the United States.

In 1991, Rolling Stones Magazine wrote an article that was titled, "Is This The Woman Who Invented Rock n Roll"?. The article focuses on what is considered the most significant defining moment in the birth of Rhythm and Blues. The year is 1948. The place was Baltimore, MD. The principals include a young group of Black singers who called themselves the Vibranaires. The woman that Rolling Stone paid tribute to

53 years later was an 18 year old white Jewish girl named Deborah Chessler. She was a struggling songwriter but did have one her songs recorded by Savannah Churchill. The song was "Tell Me So" but it died a quick death. Deborah knew the song had more life in it and needed a different treatment.

Shortly thereafter, Deborah received a call from a friend who wanted her to hear a local vocal group looking to make a record. The Vibranaires sang over the phone and she immediately knew she found the group to sing her songs. The lead singer's name was Erlington Tilghman. His professional name was Sonny Til.

Deborah brought the group to appear in a talent show but they lost. They all returned to Baltimore and could have easily disappeared into the
abyss of lost hopes. Deborah persevered and returned to New York determined to succeed. Through a combination of skill, luck, bravery, charm and sheer will she landed a recording contract with Jerry Blaine, owner of Jubilee Records. He contrived a new label to showcase this group. He also gave them a new name, the Orioles. Their first song would be a Deborah Chessler composition that she write in a bathroom on toilet paper.

On August 21st, It's A Natural Records released "It's Too Soon To Know". The rest they say is history. This record struck a chord, initially with Black audiences, that is still reverberating today. The Mills Brothers, Ink Spots and even the Ravens, for the most part, were Black singers, singing to white audiences. Sonny Til and the Orioles

walked to center stage in those Black urban centers and the words poured out .....

"Does She Love Me, It's Too
Soon to
Know"
"Can I
Believe Her, When SheTells Me
So"
"Or Is She Fooling, Is It All A
Game"
"Am I The Fire, Or Just Another Flame"

Rhythm and Blues was truly underway. Black singers across the country heard Sonny Til and the Orioles and that's who THEY wanted to sound like. The imitators also liked their name and the "bird' craze took off faster than the swallows could fly to Capsitrano.

Did I say Swallows ????

Obviously Rhythm and Blues didn't just occur by four or five guys getting together to sing. It was the culmination of a very long and arduous
"Journey". That "Journey" isn't really over but at one of the stops along the way, it left us a legacy of musical achievement that has traveled
beyond our borders and is loved and cherished around the world.

WE look back on the 1950's it's both informative and interesting. Spurred by low gasoline prices,
automobiles kept getting bigger and faster. A better highway system led to the growth of industries
that catered to travel conscious Americans, everything from motels, diners, drive-in theatres and
drive in soda shops were geared toward the
automobile.

American popular music reflected the changes that were occuring in society. The Street Corner
Harmony Groups layed so much of the ground work in the evolution of Rock and Roll to what it
is today, inlcuding the various forms of music that is on radio stations across this country and the
world in general. If it wasn't for the courage of these young teenagers back in the 1950's, the music
that is heard on the popular radio stations today would not be in existance. These young
troubadours opened the door for all ethnic groups to be able to sing their variety of songs and to
be able to get the recognition for their vocal
talents.

Musically, the fifties began with the steady rise in popularity of Rhythm and Blues. One of the
more popular styles of Rhythm and Blues was URBAN STREET CORNER

HARMONY.

Vocal groups hung out on the street corners of all the major cities harmonizing together, singing street corner harmony or DOO-WOP if you prefer to call it so. This music indeed was a musical art form and a part of American Culture and a distinct part of American Heritage. Many of the groups sang and recorded just for the fun and love of it.

This show deals with the dynamics of the street corner and the art of 3, 4, 5 and 6 part harmony. This show deals and focus's on the GREAT GROUPS, the GOLDEN GROUPS of the 1950's, who sang Street Corner Harmony across urban America.

The STREET CORNER HARMONY SHOW also features Lengendary Rock and Roll, Legendary Rock and Roll Blues, Bop Jivers. Also featured are the best dance songs from Myrtle Beach, South Carolina. I'm talking about those fabulous Shag songs that we all use to take, and dance to when we spent our times down at the beaches when we were teenagers. We even throw in some early classic MOTOWN SOUNDS by such greats as the original TEMPTATIONS, SMOKEY ROBINSON AND THE MIRACLES, MARY WELLS, KIM WESTON, SHORTY LONG, THE ISLEY BROTHERS, THE CONTOURS, THE MARVELETTS, MARTHA REEVES AND THE VANDELLAS, AND MANY, MANY MORE.

The STREET CORNER HARMONY SHOW is six hours of the greatest R & B artists that ever recorded. WE have 17,000 songs in our own private collection. Songs that other radio stations can only dream of having and playing. That is why the STREET CORNER HARMONY SHOW is so unique. Recapture your youth, back when cool was in and cruising was the thing to do.

Go back in time of the GOLDEN ERA of ROCK AND ROLL. Back to when it all began. Everything after, us just a glimmer of that fabulous decade. I'm talking about the 50's and early to mid 60's.

Member:
Republican Party
310 First Street, S.E.
Washington, DC 20003

Date: 10/11/99
From: Mr.Joseph D'Alessandro
94 Angola Estates
Lewes,Delaware 19958
302-945-1554

Subject:Member # 8512 7568 1596 4858 ACLU

"potenza Italian:libertà di aria modi"